

to Flin Flon while Saskatchewan, the first province to commence the project, has not been assisted at all.

The Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Mr. Wright: No, Mr. Chairman. I want some explanation from the minister of the different treatment as between the two provinces concerning assistance in constructing a highway to Flin Flon.

Mr. Winters: I can only repeat that every effort is made to deal with all provinces on the same basis. Certainly there is no discrimination for any reasons other than those arising out of the conditions surrounding a particular project. In the one case the road went through the heart of a mining area and opened up that area. While this was done before my time, I have reviewed the situation and I find nothing that could be construed as discrimination against the province of Saskatchewan. It was a matter of circumstance.

Mr. Wright: There are no other mines along the highway that has been built from The Pas in Manitoba to Flin Flon. It does not open up any mining area; as a matter of fact the possibility of opening a mining area was as great in connection with the construction of the highway from Nipawin to Flin Flon as it was in the construction of the road in Manitoba. Certainly the explanation by the minister cannot be accepted, because the road from The Pas to Flin Flon does not open up any mining area. It is an old area, and the road pretty well follows the railway that was built from The Pas to Flin Flon a number of years ago. On the other hand the road from Nipawin to Flin Flon opens up new forest reserves and possibly new mining areas.

Mr. Weaver: I think I can explain some of the statements just made by the hon. member for Melfort, who has said one or two things that are not quite accurate. In the first place the road from Nipawin to Flin Flon was not the first road to be started. The famous highway from The Pas to Flin Flon was under construction prior to the war, and on the outbreak of war was abandoned half way between The Pas and Cranberry Portage. Work was not commenced on it again until almost three years ago. So that deals with that point. With regard to mining areas, the province received no assistance until this road actually entered what is known as the pre-Cambrian shield at Cranberry Portage, and it is only thirty-eight miles from there to Flin Flon, for which this vote helps to pay. Saskatchewan received the same treatment. The highway from Nipawin to Flin Flon enters the pre-Cambrian shield approximately at a point known as Beaver Lake, and

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as a result only fourteen miles of that road can qualify for this assistance. As to the proportion of cost I have not the actual figures, but the total cost of the road from The Pas to Flin Flon was in the neighbourhood of \$1,250,000, which would make the contribution of this government a relatively small proportion of the total.

Mr. Wright: If what the hon. member for Churchill has just said is correct I should like the minister to tell us how much his department paid Saskatchewan with respect to the fourteen miles that are said to be within the pre-Cambrian shield.

Mr. Winters: Subject to correction when I check the figures, which I do not have before me at the moment, it was something in the order of \$50,000 or \$60,000.

Item agreed to.

Forestry branch—

383. Administrative division, \$70,000.

Mr. Fulton: I should like to ask the minister whether this is the point at which to bring up a question concerning a contract referred to in the last report of the public accounts committee. It has to do with the report of the Auditor General for 1948-49, dealing with the Department of Mines and Resources, at page 20, where the Auditor General commented as follows:

Order in council P.C. 5510 of November 30, 1948, authorized a contract for the construction of a "temporary building for the forest products laboratories" at Ottawa, the cost to be \$50,200. Payments in the year amounted to \$40,713. Attention is drawn to the transaction because the building has been erected on rented property, the lease for which expires on April 30, 1950.

That was a month ago yesterday.

The property has been under continuous lease by the crown since 1927. The file discloses that the owner, on August 30, 1948, consented to the erection of the building on the condition that if the crown vacated the premises and removed the building, "any excavations will be filled in and the ground restored to its present condition at the expiration of the existing lease or any renewal of same . . ."

Would the minister tell us the position with respect to the renewal of the lease which expired on April 30 of this year and what provision is in the renewed lease, if there is one, with respect to the removal of the building?

Mr. Winters: That is a matter of contract being negotiated by my colleague the Minister of Public Works, who is generally responsible for the accommodation in which the rest of us work.

Mr. Fulton: I see it in the Auditor General's report to parliament under the Department of Mines and Resources. If the present minister has no information on the matter, I could wait until we reached the estimates of the